2023 ECONOMIC REPORT
WEST CENTRAL
REGION

DEPARTMENT OF
HIGHER EDUCATION &
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The West Central Region is comprised of 13 counties in the west central part of Missouri. This region is home to cities including Warrensburg, Sedalia, Lexington, Clinton, and Nevada.

The West Central Region workforce has more than 122,000 employees, making up 4.1 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2022, 48.5 percent of the workforce was female and 51.5 percent was male. The regional average unemployment rate for 2022 was 2.7 percent.

The workforce is getting older in the West Central Region, a trend continuing throughout Missouri and the U.S. In 2022, 24.5 percent of the workforce was age 55 or older, up from 22 percent a decade earlier.

For the region, 8.3 percent of the workforce was non-white and 6.3 percent was Hispanic or Latino. This compares to the state averages of 18.1 percent non-white and 4.9 percent Hispanic or Latino.

In the West Central Region, 5.1 percent of the population (ages 18 to 64) speaks a language other than English at home. By comparison, Missouri was at 7.1 percent and the U.S. was at 23.7 percent.

The West Central Region has a higher percentage of the population with a disability compared to the state and the nation. For the West Central Region, 15.8 percent of the population has a disability compared to 12.3 percent in Missouri and 10.3 percent in the U.S.
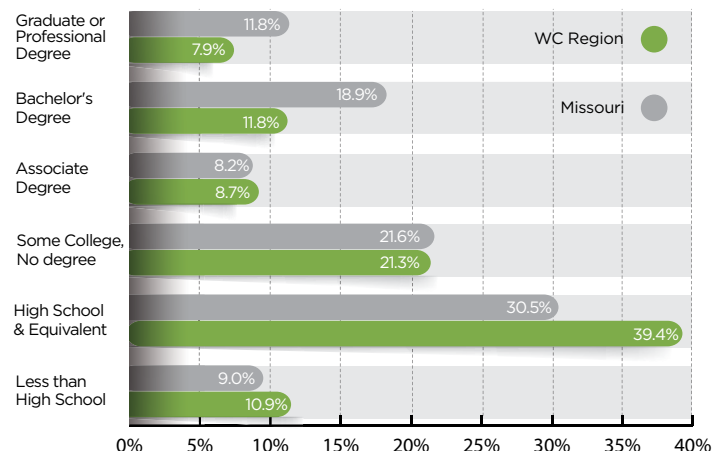
Workforce Demographics

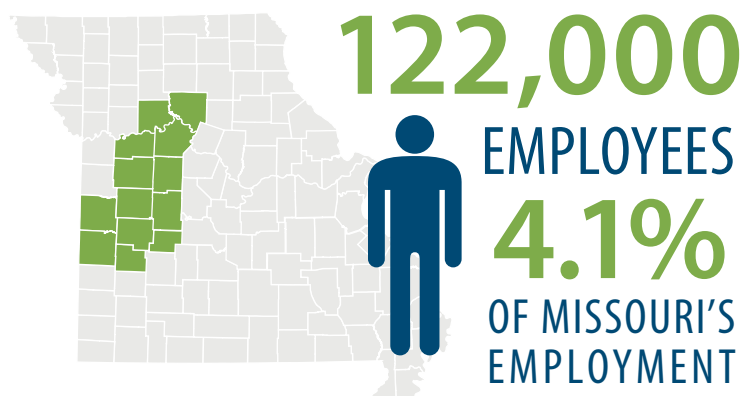|	WC Region	Missouri	Nationwide
Average Monthly Employment in 2022	122,033	2,984,340	158,291,000
Average Unemployment Rate in 2022	2.7%	2.5%	3.6%
Male	51.5%	51.1%	51.5%
Female	48.5%	48.9%	48.5%
Non-White	8.3%	18.1%	24.2%
Hispanic or Latino	6.3%	4.9%	17.4%
Ages 55 and Older	24.5%	22.5%	22.8%
With Disabilities (Ages 18-64)	15.8%	12.3%	10.3%
Below Poverty Levels (Ages 18-64)	14.7%	12.5%	11.7%
Language other than English (Ages 18-64)	5.1%	7.1%	23.7%
Education of Associate Degree or Higher	28.4%	38.9%	42.4%
Veterans (Age 18-64)	6.8%	4.9%	4.5%

SOURCES: CENSUS ACS 2021 5YR EST.; LEHD 2ND QUARTER; BLS LAUS 2022

Educational attainment rates for the West Central Region are lower than those of the state for bachelor's or advanced degrees. Twenty-eight percent of the region's population, age 25 and older, has an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree compared to 39 percent for the state, and about 42 percent for the nation. About 10.9 percent of the region's population of age 25 and older has less than high school education.

Educational Attainment

Graduate or Professional Degree: WC Region 7.9%, Missouri 11.8%
Bachelor's Degree: WC Region 11.8%, Missouri 18.9%
Associate Degree: WC Region 8.7%, Missouri 8.2%
Some College, No degree: WC Region 21.3%, Missouri 21.6%
High School & Equivalent: WC Region 39.4%, Missouri 30.5%
Less than High School: WC Region 10.9%, Missouri 9.0%

SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 2021 5-YEAR ESTIMATES

122,000
EMPLOYEES
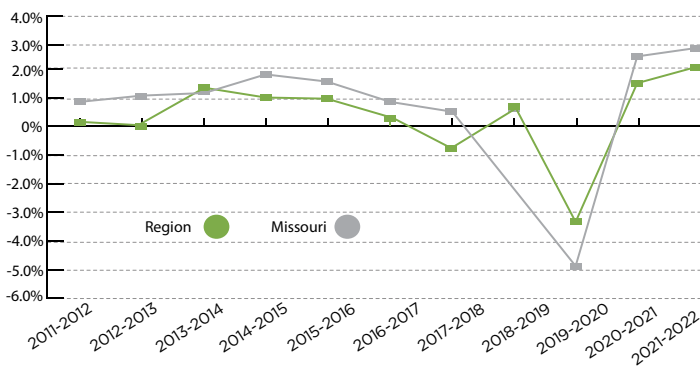# 4.1%
OF MISSOURI'S EMPLOYMENT

WEST CENTRAL REGION

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The West Central Region averaged over 84,100 jobs in 2022. The region gained 1,676 jobs, an increase of 2.0 percent from 2021 to 2022. From 2018 to 2022, the West Central Region averaged 0.25 percent compound annual growth for an overall gain of 0.8 percent. During that same period (2018-2022) Missouri had a compound annual employment gain of 0.2 percent for an overall gain of 0.9 percent.

West Central Employment Annual Growth Rate

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, QCEW

The *Health Care and Social Assistance* industry is the largest employing industry in the region with over 15,400 jobs. *Manufacturing* and *Retail Trade* are the next largest industries in the area, with over 13,700 and 10,500 jobs in 2022, respectively.

The majority of industries in the region had employment gains from 2018 to 2022.

West Central Region Top Employing Industries

Employment Industry	Net 2018	2022	Empl. Change	2018-2022 CAGR	2021 Annual Wages
Health Care & Social Assistance	15,974	15,430	-544	-0.7%	$43,176
Manufacturing	12,264	13,728	1,464	2.3%	$53,208
Retail Trade	10,186	10,585	399	0.8%	$33,852
Educational Services	8,926	8,679	-247	-0.6%	$37,188
Accommodation & Food Services	6,963	6,992	29	0.1%	$18,264
Construction	3,487	4,040	553	3.0%	$48,480
Public Administration	4,089	3,968	-121	-0.6%	$30,456
Wholesale Trade	2,795	3,072	277	1.9%	$62,964
Administrative Support & Waste	2,257	2,479	222	1.9%	$41,172
Finance & Insurance	2,600	2,432	-168	-1.3%	$60,876
Transportation & Warehousing	2,163	2,265	102	0.9%	$42,660
Prof., Scientific, &Tech. Services	1,939	2,157	218	2.2%	$65,400

SOURCE: LEHD QWI, 2018-2022 QUARTER 3 DATA

LOCATION QUOTIENT

To understand the major industries within a region, an analysis of industry concentration or clustering can be useful. The Location Quotient (LQ) describes the concentration of an industry in a geographic region, in relation to the nation, with 1.0 being the national average. Industries with higher than 1.0 LQ indicate a concentration.

The West Central Region has higher concentrations in *Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers; Animal Production and Aquaculture; Primary Metal Manufacturing; Machinery Manufacturing;* and *Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing.*

HIGHEST 2022
LQ 3.3
GASOLINE STATIONS

2022 West Central Region Location Quotients

Industry	Employment	Location Quotient
Gasoline Stations & Fuel Dealers	1,926	3.3
Animal Production & Aquaculture	408	2.8
Primary Metal Manufacturing	461	2.3
Machinery Manufacturing	1,371	2.2
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,652	2.1
Crop Production	624	2.0
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	3,357	2.0
Food Manufacturing	1,875	2.0
Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry	383	1.8
General Merchandise Retailers	2,881	1.6
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	1,660	1.5
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	1,735	1.4
Building Material Supplies Dealers	1,073	1.3
Social Assistance	2,927	1.2
Repair & Maintenance	882	1.1

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES 2022
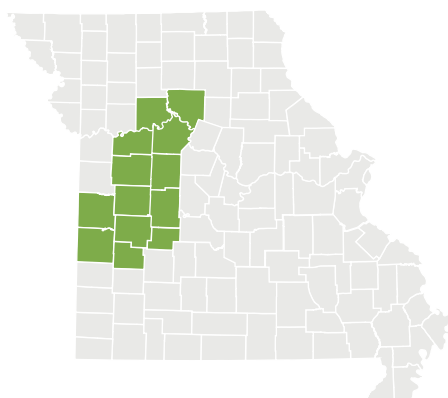
WEST CENTRAL REGION

Projected growth in industry helps to identify future employment needs for an area. Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the West Central Region from 2020-2030 will be in the *Food Services and Drinking Places; Hospitals, Educational Services; Ambulatory Health Care Services;* and *Food Manufacturing* industries.

West Central Region Largest Growth Industries 2020-2030

Industry	Employment 2020 Estimated	Employment 2030 Projected	Change 2020-2030 Numeric	Change 2020-2030 Percent
Food Services & Drinking Places	6,354	7,473	1,119	17.6%
Hospitals	4,211	4,607	396	9.4%
Educational Services	9,686	10,049	363	3.8%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,188	2,507	319	14.6%
Food Manufacturing	3,798	4,086	288	7.6%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,666	1,927	261	15.7%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1,707	1,956	249	14.6%
Administrative & Support Services	1,439	1,618	179	12.4%
Machinery Manufacturing	1,345	1,515	170	12.6%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	998	1,154	156	15.6%

SOURCES: MERIC INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

PROJECTED GROWTH BY INDUSTRY HELPS TO IDENTIFY FUTURE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS FOR AN AREA.
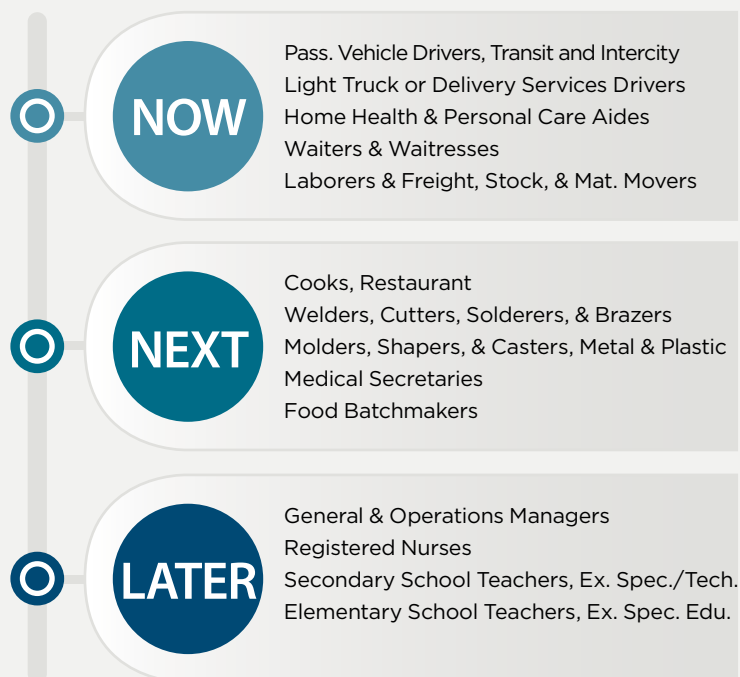
OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS

MERIC produces occupational projections that estimates labor demand over a 10-year period. MERIC categorizes these occupations using its Now-Next-Later method to help job seekers understand the training, education, and experience requirements for various occupations.

Now jobs typically require short-term, on-the-job training, little to no experience, and/or a high school diploma. **Now** occupations with the most projected openings are *Home Health and Personal Care Aides; Cashiers;* and *Fast Food and Counter Workers. Passenger Vehicle Driver; Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers;* and *Home Health and Personal Care Aides* are projected to be the fastest growing **Now** occupations over the next decade.

Next jobs typically require a non-degree certificate, associate degree, apprenticeship, some experience, or moderate to long-term training. *Cooks; Nursing Assistants;* and *Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers* are projected to have the most openings for the **Next** category of occupations. *Cooks; Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers;* and *Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters* are the fastest growing **Next** occupations.

Later jobs typically require a bachelor's degree or higher. For **Later** occupations, *Secondary School Teachers; General and Operations Managers;* and *Registered Nurses* are projected to have the most openings. *General and Operations Managers; Registered Nurses;* and *Secondary School Teachers* are the fastest growing **Later** occupations.

West Central Region Fastest Growing Occupations

NOW
- Pass. Vehicle Drivers, Transit and Intercity
- Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers
- Home Health & Personal Care Aides
- Waiters & Waitresses
- Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Mat. Movers

NEXT
- Cooks, Restaurant
- Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers
- Molders, Shapers, & Casters, Metal & Plastic
- Medical Secretaries
- Food Batchmakers

LATER
- General & Operations Managers
- Registered Nurses
- Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Spec./Tech.
- Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Spec. Edu.

NOTE: OCCUPATIONS WITH ANNUAL TOTAL OPENINGS OF LESS THAN 50 ARE OMITTED
SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

WEST CENTRAL REGION

West Central Region Long-Term Occupational Projections by Top Openings

Occupation	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Growth Openings	Exits	Transfers	Total Openings	Median Wages
◉ NOW							
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	3,638	4,176	54	250	221	525	$22,380
Cashiers	2,752	2,544	-21	225	254	458	$22,665
Fast Food & Counter Workers	1,701	1,848	15	172	188	375	$21,202
Waiters & Waitresses	1,614	1,811	20	126	204	350	$20,179
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	2,016	2,193	18	92	183	293	$28,246
◉ NEXT							
Cooks, Restaurant	1,285	1,829	54	92	133	279	$22,004
Nursing Assistants	1,503	1,545	4	98	86	188	$23,783
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,521	1,623	10	64	107	181	$45,163
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	1,457	1,511	5	52	87	144	$34,889
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	970	1,009	4	44	46	94	$24,253
◉ LATER							
Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Spec. & Tech. Edu.	2,295	2,392	10	62	95	167	$42,934
General & Operations Managers	1,441	1,552	11	30	93	134	$59,631
Registered Nurses	1,597	1,713	12	44	42	98	$60,913
Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Spec. Edu.	688	714	3	22	28	53	$41,616
Proj. Mngt. Specialists & Business Op. Specialists	576	575	0	13	28	41	$67,698

SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS 2020-2030

ONLINE JOB POSTINGS

Job postings are an indicator of demand and opportunities in an area, and can assist individuals seeking job opportunities in current in-demand occupations. According to information based on online job posting data collected and aggregated by Lightcast™ for the West Central Region, jobs like *Registered Nurses; Retail Salespersons;* and *Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses* had a high number of job postings in the region during the last year.

West Central Region Top Five Online Job Postings in Now-Next-Later Classification

Occupation Title	Online Job Postings
◉ NOW	
Retail Salespersons	540
Fast Food & Counter Workers	430
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	360
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	300
Customer Service Representatives	260
◉ NEXT	
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	450
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	430
Food Service Managers	410
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	390
Merchandise Displayers & Window Trimmers	310
◉ LATER	
Registered Nurses	1,200
Managers, All Other	200
Medical & Health Services Managers	180
Software Developers	170
Postsecondary Teachers	160

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST™, ONLINE JOB ADS FROM MAY 1, 2022 - APRIL 30, 2023